Castlemaine Naturalist

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Monthly newsletter of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.

A dazed Goshawk after a window strike
photo by Tanya Loos

Joint Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club/BirdLife Castlemaine District Branch talk by Tanya Loos on 12 August

CFNC and BCD were pleased to host a talk by Tanya Loos on the topic of "Window Strike: When birds hit windows". The meeting was held via Zoom with a large number of people participating.

Tanya is a nature writer and science communicator with a passion for birds and has previously worked at Connecting Country and BirdLife Australia. She is currently working at Macedon Ranges Shire Council in the role of Biodiversity Projects Officer.

Tanya began her informative talk by recounting a personal experience involving a Brown Goshawk that flew through a window at her bushland home and was found dazed on a sofa opposite Tanya's equally dazed dogs! Fortunately this bird survived the trauma with Tanya covering it with a towel and placing it in a large plastic box for transport to a wild life carer.

Tanya then described the actions that can be taken if a bird is injured by flying into a window – see slide below. She emphasised keeping the bird warm and ensuring that is in a quiet area.

If no obvious injuries – blood or eyes like this – place in box with tea towel, and in a quiet room
No food or water
Call wildlife Rescue if its late in the day or weekend
Release after an hour or two – or take to shelter/ vet
Shining Bronze-cuckoo with concussion, pic by Pauline Nice

Researching the topic of window strike, Tanya has found that the rate of window strike is extremely high in North America where it is estimated that more than a billion birds are lost this way each year. Migratory songbirds and raptors are most at risk. Collisions are more frequent during autumn migrations and spring breeding seasons and often involve species that

exhibit fast, agile and direct flying patterns. By contrast, flocking species are less likely to collide with windows.

What do we know? US and Canada literature review…
Migratory species are some of the most vulnerable to window collisions
Collisions are more frequent during autumn migrations and spring breeding seasons
Species who exhibit fast, agile and direct flying patterns are more susceptible to window collisions
Flocking species are less likely to collide with windows
Victims of window strike in Toronto in 2015

Tanya referred to the "Bird Strike Project" conducted by BirdLife Australia. Unfortunately this project isn't ongoing but the data gathered provide information about the problem in Australia. The aims of the project were to provide a single management point for BLA partners in data collection, solutions and eventually to go beyond simple solutions and work across industry to get bird-friendly technology into buildings and other infrastructure.

The Australian data for window strike are summarised by Tanya in this slide.

Australian data?
Analysis of historical records, plus records from 15 wildlife care organisations 1904 – 2019
From 1904 – 2018, 269 species from 68 families were reported to collide with windows.
Trends – exhibit seasonal movements or migration – Sacred Kingfisher, Red Wattlebird, New Holland Honeyeater, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Silvereye and Welcome Swallow
fir0002
flagstaffotos [at] gmail.com

Using the available data, the most records for species killed by window strike are for the Rainbow Lorikeet, Laughing Kookaburra, Australian Magpie, Tawny Frogmouth, Galah, Noisy Miner, Australian Ringneck, Crimson Rosella, Sacred Kingfisher plus a smaller number of records for unidentified birds.

The number of threatened species involved in window strike are of concern and include Regent Honeyeaters, Swift Parrots, Powerful Owls and Flame Robins. As many as 2% (40 birds) of the total Swift Parrot population are estimated to be killed annually from collisions involving windows, fences (particularly chain-link fences such as those erected at sporting arenas to stop balls leaving the area) and vehicles.

Tanya went on to look at what is already known about the problems that cause birds to strike windows. These include large areas of transparent or reflective glass; windows that reflect sky or vegetation that may appear as an available flight path or habitat; and individual buildings that have their own unique set of characteristics that may influence window collisions. It is also known that collisions are more of a risk in older neighbourhoods where there is complex vegetation. Low-rise buildings close to urban greenspaces are also hotspots for window collisions.

Landscaping features such as birdbaths, bird feeders, resource-rich trees and water features bring birds closer to windows and increase the risk of collision. Moving these features away from windows would decrease the likelihood of window strike.

To make windows bird-safe, break up the reflection and make the glass visible. Tanya stressed that visual markers need to be 5cm apart both vertically and horizontally and placed on the outside of the window. Various forms of markers can be used including dots, lines and patterns or a lattice work of strings attached to the outside of the window, as long as they cover the window and are closely spaced.

Tanya advised that there are many webpages covering the topic of window collisions and offering advice for reducing the risk. Although the BLA bird strike project has been discontinued, this webpage still provides useful information on the topic: https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/getinvolved/Bird-Strike-Project

Further documents on this topic may be found via the following link: https://birdlife.org.au/events/detail/joint-birdlife-castlemaine-district-branch-and-castlemaine-field-naturalist/birdlife-castlemaine-district/

Following a question from the audience about how and where window strike can be reported, Tanya advised that she would follow up with Jane Rusden, BCD Convener, and advise further.

Peter Turner and Jane Rusden thanked Tanya for sharing her knowledge on this under-researched but important subject.

Judy Hopley

An afternoon along Youngman's Track

Peter Turner

The planned walk around Eureka Reef for our August excursion was cancelled after Marli Wallace – who was to have led us – and Lou Citroen checked the day before – paths wet and slippery, few flowers out and few birds; and the forecast was for rain and possible thunder! At the meeting on Friday, announcing the cancellation of the Eureka Reef walk, I had suggested those interested meet at the Octopus if the rain held off – and Saturday afternoon was dry, with some sunny intervals! Five of us arrived at the Octopus and decided to check out Youngman's Track.

First stop was a short way from the start of the track, then on to the junction of Youngman's and Escape tracks – where Geraldine found extensive group of Gnat Orchid leaves, some with flower stalks. A single Leopard Orchid about to open was spotted, and a few early Early Nancy flowers. This area has many Goldfields Grevillea shrubs, which were flowering. Our final stop was near the intersection with Reilly's Track, where the hillside on the east of the track was covered with vigorous Dusty Miller shrubs in flower – a spectacular sight. At the top of the hill we had clear views of a White-eared Honeyeater – the only bird seen other than a group of Choughs. A small grey Grasshopper was sitting on a grey log – identified with the help of iNaturalist as a Bark-mimicking Grasshopper *Coryphistes ruricola.* West of the track, searching down the slope, we discovered many clumps of Nodding and Dwarf Greenhoods, and a single Scented Sundew flower. A rewarding couple of hours.

Gnat Orchid in bud
Cyrtostylis reniformis

Goldfields Grevillea
G.dryophylla

Plants in flower (f) or with well-developed buds (b)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Stop 1	Stop 2	Stop 3
Purple Coral-pea	*Hardenbergia violacea*		f	
Billy Buttons	*Craspedia variabilis*			f
Tall Sundew	*Drosera auriculata*		b	b
Scented Sundew	*Drosera aberrans*			f
Creamy Candles	*Stackhousia monogyna*			f
Early Nancy	*Wurmbea dioica*		f	f
Leopard Orchid	*Diuris pardina*		b	
Dwarf Greenhood	*Pterostylis nana*			f
Nodding Greenhood	*Pterostylis nutans*	f		f
Small Gnat Orchid	*Cyrtostylis reniformis*		b	b
Gold-dust Wattle	*Acacia acinacea*	b	b	f
Rough Wattle	*Acacia aspera*	f	f	f
Golden Wattle	*Acacia pycnantha*	f	f	f
Gorse Bitter-pea	*Daviesia ulcifolia*		f	f
Downy Grevillea	*Grevillea alpina*	f	f	f
Goldfields Grevillea	*Grevillea dryophylla*		f	f
Common Hovea	*Hovea heterophylla*	f	f	f
Fairy Waxflower	*Philotheca verrucosa*		f	f
Dusty Miller	*Spyridium parvifolium*			f
Pink Bells	*Tetratheca ciliate*		b	b
Field Rush	*Luzula meridionalis*			f

Bark-mimicking Grasshopper

Dusty Miller in flower

Above - Nodding Greenhoods *P. nutans*

Right – Dwarf Greenhoods; photo by Geraldine Harris

Photo Observations

Mez Woodward – 1: Colour variation in two different colonies of the rare Slaty Helmet Orchid *Corybas incurvus.*

Unusual silver-green hoods (left) and the normally dark heads (right)

2: Gnat Orchid *Cyrtostylis reniformis*

Judy Hopley – Dwarf Greenhoods *Pterostylis nana* in a moss base (right)

Observations September (1944)

George Broadway

In the September 1944 issue 'Wildlife' magazine, the editorial was devoted to a distressing account of the fate of many Koalas on Quail Island.

Quail Island is a small island in the north of Westernport Bay, off the village of Tooradin. Several years previously some koalas had been relocated to here from Phillip Island in order to reduce the risk to the population in the event of a fire or pestilence or some other reason, Phillip Island then being the only considerable colony of koalas in Victoria.

The population had flourished and by 1943 naturalists had pointed out that most of the food trees on the island had been eaten bare and there was an imminent danger of starvation for many of the koalas. They however were told to mind their own business. The publicity was met with a barrage of ministerial defence and the public was told that the naturalists did not know what they were talking about. Eventually when it became glaringly obvious that something would have to be done - the koalas were removed, several months too late. A brief survey of the island revealed many recently dead koalas, a gruesome proof of the naturalists' predictions. On other pages were printed photos which had been taken recently showing large numbers of dead koalas and the leafless food trees.

And so to the readers' observations and queries. Not so many this month.

Birds

E.Melbourne: From your description it seems that the small bird you described from Tasmania was the Striated Field Wren or Calamanthus.

Insects

Narre Warren: The main mass of the galls were females with four long leaf-like extensions on each and males like a miniature factory chimney. A species of gall-making scale insect *Apiomorpha* which attacks gum trees. An unusual feature was the occurrence of male "Chimneys" growing on female galls. Your other gall was a "Nutmeg" gall, Another *Apiomorpha*.

Belgrave: An empty box; presumably the inmates escaped during transit. The "things" in blankets would most likely be the larvae of the Carpet Beetle, *Anthrenoceras australis.* Barrel shaped, brown with long brown fur, which may cause irritation in some people.

Balwyn: A Mole Cricket. *Gryllotalpa monanka*. Harmless until it starts eating the roots of desirable plants. The wingless male constructs a tunnel which acts as an echo chamber in order to attract the winged female. The sound produced can be deafening on summer nights.

Northcote: Not the Wattle Goat Moth but a close relative, the Red Gum Ghost

Moth, *Abantiades marcidus.* Normally they emerge from the ground on cold, drizzly nights. (see photo)

E.Malvern: Ribbed Gum Weevil. Possibly *Gonipterus gibberus or G.scutellatus*. Not a problem in Australia, but may be a problem for Eucalypts in other countries where their natural enemies are absent.

Wahroonga NSW: the "beetle" is one of the spiny weevils, *Acantholophus,* wingless and ground-dwelling. The fly is a *Tachinid*, parasitic on the larvae of butterflies and moths.. Interesting to find it occurring in the Wanderer Butterfly.

Dreeite: A Tree Cricket, a specimen often sent in. See June '10. Also from Herne Hill.

Spiders

Hughesdale: Orchard or Bird-Dropping Spider. Another specimen frequently sent in. See July '16. Also from W. Brunswick.

Vermont: Melbourne Trapdoor. *Aname butleri*. Also July '16. Also from Brighton.

Botanical

E.Kew: Clavaria, the Coral fungus which grows in a number of beautiful shapes and colours.

Haberfield NSW: The Silky Kapok Creeper, *Araujia* or "Cruel Plant". Cruel because it traps moths and other insects by their mouth parts. The kapok has no commercial use.

Maldon: Dried specimen of *Clathrus*, The Basket Fungus. Grows like a large puff-ball underground and when ripe bursts above ground to release a ball which contains the spores.

Whittlesea: The wrinkled purple-brown fungus was a Morel, *Morchella,* a prized delicacy.

Hawthorn: Fruit of the Nepal Strawberry Tree, *Cornus capitata* AKA *Benthamia fragifera.* From the lower Himalayas, grows to ca 5 m. Bears large creamy-white flowers and large strawberry-like fruits which are edible. Also known as a Dogwood.

General

Murrumbeena: One of the Horseshoe shrimps, *Lepidurus* A small crustacean which appears quickly in swamps and temporary pools of water. (It is said to be common, but although I always scan such pools of water whenever I get the chance, I have only found it twice in 70 years). See photo right.

Malvern: One of the small Rat-kangaroos; there are a number of similar marsupials of this type. The smallest are called Jerboa Pouched Mice from their similarity to the Egyptian Jerboa which is a true rodent, not a marsupial.

Geelong: The fish that "almost flew out of the water on to the sand and then began walking about on the 'legs' under the gills while at the same time making a grunting noise" was a Butterfly Gurnard, *Paratrigia vanessa* with the front fins well developed and coloured so they resemble a butterfly's wings. It is good eating and smokes well.

Crabtree: Native Water Rat, less common now than they used to be. They are true rodents, not marsupials. (Now we know them as Rakali, which sounds better than rat.) *Hydromys chrysogaster* is their scientific name. Not all are "golden-bellied" as their name implies.

Nhill: Your Mouse-like specimen was a Dormouse Possum, about the smallest marsupial and rather rare. *Cercartetus nana* aka Eastern Pygmy Possum as well as at least 16 other common names which had been used until a common name was settled.

Birds of Sutton Grange August 2022

Nigel Harland

Superb Fairy-wren	White-browed Scrubwren	Australian Magpie
Australian Raven	Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Long-billed Corella	Crimson Rosella
New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow	Common Bronzewing
Red Wattlebird	Galah	Striated Pardalote
Grey Currawong	Eastern Rosella	Eurasian Blackbird
House Sparrow	White-faced Heron	Peregrine Falcon

Delighted to see the Peregrine, not seen very often.

Roadside Cleanup Report

Geoffrey Harris

Surprising 'rubbish' found by Geraldine at the recent Roadside Cleanup. Not only are our Roadside Cleanups good for the environment and community pride, this time our Club finances also benefited by $25!

We were lucky that the forecast showers held off and the amount of rubbish was less than normal, although it was quite wet under-foot. We collected about 400 litres of rubbish. Yellow Gums, Golden and Rough Wattles were flowering.

Thanks to Nigel, Peter, Sue, Geraldine and Clodagh.

COMING EVENTS

MONTHLY MEETING: Friday 9th September 7.30 pm at the Uniting Church Hall, Lyttleton St

Speaker: Nicholas Carter (Deakin University) "Powerful Owl Ecology – comparison of rural and forested environments"

Deakin University's Powerful Owl Research Team have been involved with Powerful Owls for over 20 years. At the core, the research aims to understand how increased urbanisation and landscape modification impacts this threatened apex predator, whilst also identifying solutions that can contribute to the conservation of the species.

PhD student Nick Carter will describe how the team has been using GPS to track Powerful Owls to uncover the nocturnal exploits and daytime roosting sites of this extremely elusive species. Tracking individuals year after year across different areas of Victoria, we learn more about how owls respond to their local environments and identify resources that are important to them; data that are key not only for our research but also local land managers and industry to implement effective conservation management and impact mitigation strategies.

If you have observations to report at the meeting and photo(s) to illustrate your report, please email them to Euan Moore (calamanthus5@bigpond.com) by noon on Friday 9th.

Please note that we are returning to the Uniting Church Hall for this and subsequent meetings this year, provided there are no changes to current Covid requirements. We strongly recommend that you wear a mask during the meeting.

EXCURSION: Saturday 10 September – Leader Julie Radford

The Monk Hill

Bendigo-based ecologist and 'orchid-whisperer' Julie Radford will lead an excursion on and around The Monk to search for orchids and other wildflowers. The Monk is one of the areas near Castlemaine that is particularly rich in orchids, with at least twelve species flowering there at different times of the year. Julie has been studying and conserving orchids in the Castlemaine district for many years.

Golden Moth Orchid (*Diuris chryseopsis*) – photo by Cathrine Harboe-Ree

Meet: 1.30 pm at the Octopus (Duke St, opposite the Castle Motel) or 1.50 pm at the car park at the base of The Monk, 1.9 kilometres from Chewton on Dingo Park Road where the water race crosses the road. Dingo Park Road is the extension of Eureka Street which runs south from the Pyrenees Highway just before the Chewton Shell Service station.

Bring: Binoculars, water, afternoon tea and hat. There may be off-track walking in rough terrain, so sturdy shoes and a walking stick are recommended.

The Field Trip will be cancelled in extreme weather conditions.

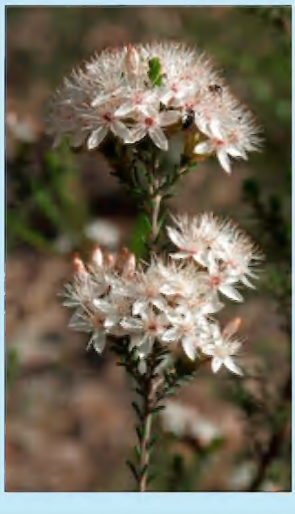
WEDNESDAY WILDFLOWER WANDERS

During September each year, when so many the local plants in the Box-Ironbark woodlands of our region are flowering, we arrange late afternoon excursions to nearby sites to enjoy the wildflowers. The first of these will be on **Wednesday 7th September**:

A loop walk in Kalimna Park led by Peter and Rosemary Turner.

Meet at the Octopus (opposite the motel in Duke St) ready to leave at **4 pm**, returning by about 5.30 pm. There are a few rough spots along the track, so sturdy footwear and a walking pole if you use one are advised.

Wildflower Wanders will be cancelled in extreme weather conditions.



Beard-heath and Fringe-myrtle flowers - photos by Noel Young.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club

PROGRAM

Please note that we are returning to the Uniting Church Hall for this and subsequent meetings this year, provided there are no changes to current Covid requirements. We strongly recommend that you wear a mask during the meeting.

If you have observations to report at the meeting and photo(s) to illustrate your report, please email them to Euan Moore (calamanthus5@bigpond.com) by noon on Friday 9th.

Excursions are on the Saturday after the monthly meeting. Meet at the Octopus (opposite the motel in Duke St) for departure at 1.30pm unless otherwise advised.

Fri Sept 9 Meeting 7.30pm: Nick Deacon (Deakin Uni) "Powerful Owl ecology - comparison of rural and forested environments"

Sat Sept 10 Excursion 1.30pm: "Orchid search in the Castlemaine region" with Julie Radford

Fri Oct 14 Meeting 7.30pm: Georgie Custance "The Fryerstown Grevillea (*Grevillea obtecta*) – a threatened species in our area"

Sat Oct 15 Excursion 1.30pm: Georgie Custance "*Grevillea obtecta* project – learn how to identify and record sightings of this rare species in the field"

Fri Nov 11 Meeting 7.30pm: Dr. Christina McCowan (Melbourne University) "*Mycobacterium ulcerans* (Buruli ulcer) in our native mammals in the wild"

Club website (Web master: Ron Wescott) - www.castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au

Castlemaine Naturalist - email newsletter material to: newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com

*Deadline for the October edition is September 30.

Subscriptions for 2022
Ordinary membership: Single $35, Family $50
Pensioner or student: Single $25, Family $30
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